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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS:ENRG, ECON, UR
SUBJECT: PRAVDA ON SAMOTLOR AND TYUMEN PETROLEUM PROBLEMS

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED
SUMMARY: PRAVDA ARTICLE (JUNE 5) BY TWO CORRESPONDENTS IN TYUMEN REGION, STATES THAT SAMOTLOR FIELD WILL REACH (VYKHODIT NA) PROJECTED CAPACITY IN 1978 AND THAT FUTURE LIES WITH FIELDS FURTHER NORTH. HOWEVER, DRILLING IN TYUMEN AREA IS BEHIND PLAN BECAUSE OF FAILURES OF OTHER MINISTRIES THAN PETROLEUM MINISTRY TO SUPPLY NECESSARY ROADS, CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT AND ELECTRICITY. ARTICLE ATTRIBUTES FAILURE OF TYUMEN OIL/GAS TO REACH RECOVERY TARGET FROM NEW FIELDS TO THESE SHORTCOMINGS.
END SUMMARY.

1. FIVE COLUMN, SECOND PAGE PRAVDA ARTICLE ENTITLED "IN A NEW STAGE" MENTIONS AT OUTSET THAT SOVIET OIL BELLWETHER, SAMOTLOR, WILL REACH FULL CAPACITY THIS YEAR. WHILE IT DOES NOT DISCUSS HOW LONG SAMOTLOR IS EXPECTED TO PRODUCE AT CAPACITY, ARTICLE SAYS THAT
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"NEW STAGE" MEANS RELIANCE ON ENTIRE REGION(AND NOT JUST ONE FIELD). UST-BALYK AND MAMONTOVO ARE DESCRIBED AS ALSO AT OR APPROACHING PEAK.

2. NEW ERA, FIRST OF ALL, MEANS TRANSFER OF FACTORS OF PRODUCTION TO MORE NORTHERN FIELDS LIKE VAROGANO, FEDOROV AND KHOLMOGORSK. OF 23 FIELDS TO BE OPENED DURING

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CURRENT FIVE YEAR PLAN, EIGHT WILL OCCUR IN 1978, BUT AT A HIGHER COST AND LOWER RETURN, AUTHORS STATE. THREE TIMES AS MUCH DRILLING WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE SAME AMOUNT OF OIL. TYUMEN ALONE WILL HAVE TO DRILL 21 MILLION METERS OF WELLS IN REMAINING YEARS OF FIVE YEAR PLAN, ALMOST AS MUCH AS ALL OTHER AREAS OF USSR COMBINED.

3. ARTICLE ASSERTS THAT TYUMEN CANNOT ACHIEVE DRILLING TASKS BY OWN STRENGTH ALONE, SINCE 1.3 MILLION METERS MORE MUST BE DRILLED IN 1978 THAN IN 1977. DISCUSSING "EXPEDITIONARY" BRIGADES FLOWN FROM TATAR, BASHKIR, KUIBYSHEV AND SARATOV TO SURGUT AND NIZHNEVARTOVSK, TO DRILL 700 MILLION METERS, WRITERS NOTE THAT THESE BRIGADES ARE NOT AS A WHOLE ACHIEVING SATISFACTORY RESULTS. SINCE BEGINNING OF 1978 "TENS OF THOUSANDS" OF METERS OF WELLS HAVE NOT BEEN DRILLED BECAUSE OF A LACK OF MACHINERY, INSTRUMENTS AND MOBILE LIVING QUARTERS FOR THE BRIGADES. INSTEAD OF 100 DRILLING RIGS, ONLY 55 WERE DELIVERED, AND INSTEAD OF THE 167 NEEDED FOR 1979, ONLY 100 HAVE BEEN PROMISED.

4. HOWEVER, MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR TYUMEN IS DISHARMONY AMONG MINISTRIES, AUTHORS STATE. ROADS HAVE BEEN LACKING BECAUSE THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT CONSTRUCTION HAS SUPPLIED ONLY HALF THE AMOUNT NEEDED. (IT IS NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACCIDENT, THEY ADD, THAT TYUMEN OIL/GAS ADMINISTRATION IS FAILING TO MEET OIL PRODUCTION TARGETS FOR NEW FIELDS.) IN TURN THAT MINISTRY REJECTS HIGHER TARGETS CITING ITS OWN SUPPLY DIFFICULTIES (ALTHOUGH FACTORIES PRODUCING ROAD PAVING MATERIAL ARE NOT OVERWORKED, AUTHORS NOTE). WHEREAS 20.4 MILLION CUBIC METERS OF FILL (GRUNT) ARE NEEDED THIS YEAR AND SOME 30 MCM IN 1979, ONLY 15 MCM CAN BE DELIVERED PER ANNUM. HENCE THERE IS A DANGER OF NOT MEETING DRILLING PLANS IN TYUMEN, AUTHORS CONCLUDE.

5. ARTICLE ALSO CRITICIZES MINISTRIES OF ENERGY AND ELECTRICITY FOR FAILURE TO SUPPLY TYUMEN AREA. FOR EXAMPLE, THE KHOLMOGORSK FIELD IS STILL BEING DRILLED WITH DIESEL POWER, RATHER THAN ELECTRICITY. THE SITUATION IS EVEN WORSE IN GAS PRODUCING AREAS, ACCORDING TO PRAVDA.

6. FINALLY, THE RAILROADS GET THEIR INEVITABLE REPROACH, WITH SVERDLOVSK RAILROAD COLLECTIVE SINGLED OUT FOR FAILURE TO SUPPLY ROAD MATERIAL, CEMENT, METAL AND DRILLING EQUIPMENT.

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7. COMMENT: IF THE PRAVDA REPORTERS ARE ACCURATELY IN-
FORMED, THEIR ASSERTION THAT SAMOTLOR WILL REACH CAPACITY
IN 1978, TOGETHER WITH THE STATEMENT THAT NEW TYUMEN
OILFIELDS ARE PRODUCING BELOW PLAN, SEEMS TO FORESHADOW
AN UPHILL STRUGGLE IN LAST TWO YEARS OF THE CURRENT
FIVE YEAR PLAN TO ATTAIN THE STIPULATED INCREASES.
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